

CS 97-55



MAR 11 1997

MOREAU CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL

## Ethics in Media Communications

Federal Communications Commission  
1919 M Street NW, Rm 222  
Washington, D.C. 20554

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March 5, 1997

I think it is great that you guys care enough to use a rating system to inform the viewer how the programs are rated. But why would you use a confusing system that is totally different than the system we have been using for years at movie theatres. Again, I say that it is great for you to try and show viewers what to expect on the shows they are watching, but your system is not as clear as it should be. I feel that violence and sex are two different parts of a show that can and should be rated differently. I feel that before each show, you need to explain clearly how much sex, violence, horror, and language there will be so that the viewer will know whether he or she should watch. And this way, parents will be able to stop their child from watching a bad television program. My point is that you need to keep your rating system clear and simple so that your viewers don't end up watching something on the television that they shouldn't see.

Andrew Wells

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## **Ethics in Media Communications**

Federal Communications Commission  
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March 5, 1997

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Dear Madam or Sir:

Through the course of this Ethics in Media Communications class we have spent a great deal of time analyzing the new rating system for television programs. I am pleased to see that this issue is finally getting the attention that it has long deserved, as the issue of appropriateness is usually ignored.

I realize that this new rating system is not perfect, but it is definitely a step in the right direction. It is impossible to please all of the people all of the time. The fact that the new ratings are given by a subjective source is not ideal to most and I think that if a objective rating source would prove to be much more effective.

I would also like to see more specific rating information such as the sexual and violent content of television programs. I realize that it would be extremely difficult to provide this information at a glance like the existing rating system. Perhaps if a weekly guide (like TV Guide) were made available to parents who would like more detailed information about sexual or violent content in a specific episode the rating system would be more effective.

Sincerely,  
Elisa M. Sabatini

*Elisa M. Sabatini*

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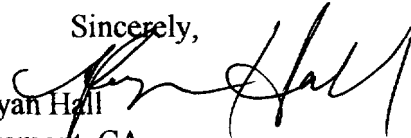
Dear whoever this may concern,

I am a student at Moreau catholic high school in Hayward california. Write now I am enrolled in a media ethics class. In this class we study different aspects of the media and how those aspects affect society. A main topic that we have discussed over and over again is that of the newly devised tv rating system. This system is a good idea but there is always room for improvement. The rating displayed I believe should be displayed at the corner of the for at least 30 seconds every time the show comes on from a commercial break. The ratings should also display the type of content in the show to give it that rating like an "S" for sex or a "V" for violence. If these suggestions where applied to the system I think it would be a lot more effective and make it easier for parents to determine what there kids should be able to watch.

Thank you for your time,

Sincerely,

Ryan Hall  
Fremont, CA



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My name is Shawn Baxley, I'm currently a senior at Moreau Catholic High School. I am writing you in regards to the new ratings system on TV. I am 18yrs old and have a few questions about how the system works. I feel that we are heading in the correct direction but I feel we aren't doing enough. I watch Days Of Our Lives and at the beginning of each episode I see a very small box in the upper right hand corner flash a TV14 for a few questions. I understand this means that the content is suitable for 14yrs. old and up. During the show I see people in bed, people hurting other people, and even the devil himself possess a woman. Now I wonder about the young child whose guardian may have left the room for a minute and missed the few second flash of the little box. Now how will they know what the show was rated? As people flip through channels they tend to stop in shows already in progress, how will they know what the show was rated?

I also know that the new rating system will go hand in hand with the new V-Chip that will be installed in television sets soon. It was proposed that the parents would be able to block out what their kids would see by use of the ratings system. I shall infer that the way to do this would be a very simple thing because most adults today are very illiterate about new technology. It is also known that kids today are actually becoming more technically smart than their parents. So now what is going to stop the cyberkid from reprogramming what his stone age parents did before they left? I don't want to sound like I am complaining but I feel that these are valid questions that do need to be addressed.

Thank you for your time and concern

Sincerely,

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March 5, 1997

Dear Whomever:

I am writing in regards to my opinion of the new television ratings system. I am a seventeen year-old female teen who attends high school. Due to my busy schedule I do not have time to watch a lot of television, but it is often on in my home for background noise while I do my homework.

I have noticed the box in the corner of my screen, but it does not have any real meaning to me. A show that is rated TV 14, such as "The X-Files" (a show that I watch regularly), contains violence and horror, but little or no bad language and sex. My parents allow me to watch whatever programming that I would like, but as a child they kept an eye on my viewing habits. Although the rating system has no direct effect on what I am able to see, I still believe that the system in place now is too vague for parents (who this system is aiming to help) to make decisions by. To make this system more effective I think that there needs to be separate ratings for different categories such as violence, horror, language, and sex. This would allow parents to make better informed decisions concerning what is appropriate for their specific child to watch.

Thank you,

*Jessica Dietz*

Jessica Dietz

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To Whom It may concern:

My name is Cathy Parente and I am a senior at Moreau Catholic High School. In my Mass Media class we have been studying the affects that television has on us. We also have been discussing the new TV ratings system, and I would like to express my opinions on this issue. I am glad that something has been done to try and help parents in deciding what programs their children should and shouldn't watch. However, I feel that some adjustments should be made with the system.

First of all, I think the little box on the upper left corner of the screen should stay on longer than 20 seconds. People often miss the beginning of TV shows. Maybe the box should be displayed on the screen right before commercial breaks and right when the show comes back on. A lot of parents are still confused about what these ratings exactly mean. For example, TV-Y could mean anything. I think the ratings need to better specify what type of audience should watch. Please take this into consideration. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,  
Cathy Parente  
Cathy Parente

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Over the last two weeks I have seen television show ratings on the corner of my television screen. After watching these programs the ratings of these programs got me confused. The ratings include the ages for which the program is appropriate for but it does not take into consideration the content of the program.

I believe these ratings are a bit vague. It needs more information to it. I don't know by these ratings how much violence I am going to see, see or strong language. The ratings needs to be improved.

From a concerned viewer,

Gregory P. Tison

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March 5, 1997

I am a 18 year old TV viewer that goes to Moreau Catholic High School. I am in the 12 grade and presently taking a course in Ethics in Mass Media. From January onwards we have been study the new rating system carefully and discussing its effect or impact in the viewing public.

I think that this rating system is a good idea but there can be some improvements made to it. The reason I feel that improvements can be made is because family values are different in each household . Violence may not be as inexecutable in one house then in other houses. I think instead of rating by age, you should rate by content like violence, sex, nudity, and adult content. What is adult content. Is that when you pay your taxes or something. The content rating system should be explained so parents would know what they mean. They should have chips that can block out certain shows that contain content that the parents don't approve of.

Sincerely :

*Ted Balin*

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To whom it May concern,

I am a high school student and have been studying media ethics for approximately three weeks. I have been introduced to the affects of media in our society. Currently, we are observing the new ratings system the television industry has created.

I believe there is a need for such a system. Yet, it is confusing to understand. The icons only appear on the screen for a few seconds. This is not enough time notice these icons. The icons should appear longer and more frequently. Another flaw to this rating system is that it is age based, not content based. People have to watch the program before realizing it received a certain rating. Some people feel that violence shouldn't be watched but hearing violent language is acceptable.

I appreciate your time in reading my letter. Thank You.

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Sincerely,  
Regina M. Herce  
Regina M. Herce

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Dear to whoever this may concern,

I am currently a student at Moreau Catholic High school. I am in my Junior year. I am enrolled in a Mass Media class. We are studying the different media mediums and their affects on society. We are well versed in the techniques the television uses to persuade the audience.

we are quite puzzled with this new rating system that is now being used. We noticed that shows were being rated wrongly. The question is asked, "Are these ratings necessary?". Why are these ratings used? what is to be accomplished from using these rating systems? Thank you for your time and cooperation.

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Sincerely,

JOHN  
FERNANDEZ

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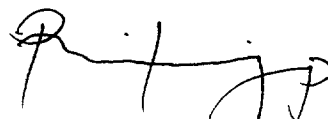
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To whom it may concern,

Hello, my name is Ricky Yap. I am currently enrolled at Moreau Catholic here in Hayward, California. I am in a class studying ethics in the media. In this class we have studied the affects of the television, movies, and the radio. We also watched and researched articles on the positive and negative affects of the television. My main purpose of this letter is to give some feedback about the new T.V. rating system. I am fully aware that this is to inform the viewers the content of the show before it is shown. I just have some suggestions to make the system more effective. First of all, the icon that is shown on the top left corner is just not good enough. It does not give enough information about how much the show has of sex, violence, and foul language. Instead the system should show a rating for each category. For the reason that, some parents may let their children watch a lot of violence and not sex or vice versa. A perfect example of a rating is the system used on H.B.O., and Showtime.

I never said that I was against this system, but I am all for <sup>the</sup> system and for the V-chip. I understand that this just came out and had nothing to base your system on. I just hope that you will take my suggestions in consideration to make your system more affective to T.V. viewers around the world.

Sincerely,

  
RICKY YAP

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To whom it may concern:

MOREAU CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL

Hello, my name is Patrick Manansala and I am a student here at Moreau Catholic High School. In my Mass Media class, we are conducting studies on the new T.V ratings. I agree with the new system and I feel that it benefits both the Parental Guide as well as the F.C.C. But as a T.V. viewer I feel that I should be more informed about the contents of a program. At least more than just a rating. I also feel that with the complaining of many parents, it limits me from being exposed to the reality of the world because of such things like censorship. If one has a problem with a certain show because it contains violence or for some other reason, I feel they should just change the channel. I think all problems concerning the ratings will be solved once all the complaining parents go out and get a T.V. set that has a v-chip. If they can't get that, it should be the parents responsibility to watch out for what their children are watching, if its that much of a problem for them. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Patrick Manansala

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March 5, 1997

Dear Federal Communications Commission,

My name is Justin Paras and as a student, here at Moreau Catholic High School, I am taking a class based on ethics in media communications. So far, we have studied how the media, be it through television, movies, or radio, affects the way people act. We have watched videos on the positive and negative effects of the media on people. The main focus of the class is to analyze the role the media plays in society.

The main reason for my writing to you is to express my concern over the current T.V. ratings which are located in the upper left hand corners of T.V. screens. I understand that this may be the first time that something of this sort has been used, but I have advice which may better your device. First off, the ratings displayed on the screen don't do a good job of specifically stating what makes the show, for example, PG 14. The ratings need to show and explain how much violence, sex, and profanity is involved in the program. Parents see that the show is rated PG 14, but don't know what type or the amount of "indecent material" contained in the program. Viewers want to know what about the show gives it the rating it receives. Along with the PG 14; violence, sex, and profanity ratings should be shown as well. For example:

PG 14  
violence: 5  
sex: 9  
profanity: 2

1-10: 1 being the lowest amount  
10 being the most amount

Although the rating system can use improvement, I am totally for it, especially the use of the V-chip. The chip would give parents total control over what their children view. Thank you for considering my ideas. Good Luck!

Sincerely,

  
Justin Paras

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March 5, 1997

Hello! I am a sixteen year old junior at Moreau Catholic High School in Hayward, California. I am currently enrolled in a mass media class which has been studying, in depth, the new ratings system. We have been watching television shows and seeing what the ratings are and why they have been given to them. Also, we are now working on a project where groups of us are choosing shows and rating them ourselves.

Personally, I think that the rating system is a good concept and it would be very effective if it might be taken more seriously. It seems as if the people who designed the system, really didn't want to, simply because you can hardly see it and it doesn't explain why the show got that rating. I believe that the system would really help parents choose what their children can and cannot watch, but only if it is improved. Some of the things that might improve it would be to say, before the show starts, whether it may contain horror, violence, sex, or language. Also, they might want to make the ratings a smidge harsher. Giving every show a PG rating is not going to help in explaining what the contents of the show is about. I hope this letter might be of some help.

Sincerely,  
Nicole Curry

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To whom it may concern:

My name is Tiffany Dunlap and I am a high school student attending Moreau Catholic in Hayward, CA. In school, I am currently studying the mass media and its effects on society. I find this class very interesting and we discuss many important issues.

One such important issue that has been brought to my attention is the new TV rating system. I think that it is a good idea to warn people about what they are watching, but the system needs a lot of work. First of all, how do we, as the viewers, know what TV14 means exactly. We question whether it is the violence, language, sexual behavior or the horror that gives the show that rating. Secondly, to only flash a small icon at the top of the screen for a few seconds at the beginning of a show is worthless. What if someone misses the rating, and then is sickened by what he sees. Lastly, the big question is, do the ratings work work? In my observations, children seem to disregard the icons, with the idea in mind that they are going to watch it anyway. I have also noticed that the majority of the shows are rated PG, even though they vary drastically in content. The audience should have a way to tell what negative aspect is in the show, so then they can decide whether to watch it or not. A rating system for television shows is a good idea, but it needs to be revised. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely yours,

*Tiffany Dunlap*  
Tiffany Dunlap

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March 5, 1997

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To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Colleen Garrigan. I am sixteen years old and a junior at Moreau Catholic High School in Hayward, California. I am currently enrolled in a class that deals with ethics in media communications. I am familiar with the new rating system and we have been studying and discussing its impacts or lack thereof.

I think that the idea of having a rating system for parents is a good idea. Parents in today's society need to be informed and involved in matters dealing with and effecting their children. I think that the rating system right now is pretty much ineffective though. It does not give parents any idea of why a particular show has a specific rating. If there is going to be a system to help parents, it needs to tell them the content and extent of that content; such as violence, language, and sexual content. If a more detailed system can be developed, I think then and only then will a rating system be effective and useful.

Sincerely,

*Colleen Garrigan*  
Colleen Garrigan

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## Ethics in Media Communications

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March 5, 1997

To: The Federal Communications Commission

I am writing to comment on the new Television Ratings System that was put into affect the first of this year. I am a high school student studying in a class for Media Ethics. Being a seventeen years old, I can not say that the ratings apply strictly to myself and others my age. They do apply to younger children, up to the age of fourteen. Lately while watching for these ratings on television shows, I have noticed that not every show has been rated, especially in prime-time. I understand that it may be difficult to rate every show on television, but there should be an effort to rate the time of day when most television is watched by the family. There are a few other changes that I want to recommend.

I am not subscribed to cable or any satellite network, so I am not totally informed on how ratings work for those networks. When I have been at a friend's house to watching cable, though, I have noticed HBO's rating system. They bring up a bright, and attention catching screen. Different symbols are shown each representing the show's content. Next to each symbol would be a text warning, explaining what each symbol covers. This idea would be a definite alternative to the current ratings system. Parents are looking for a way to limit the violence, sex, and horror seen by children during their young, delicate years of life. Please take this into consideration and thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

  
Robert Butner

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March 5, 1997

Dear F.C.C.

Hi, I am a sixteen year old teenage boy studying ethics in media at Moreau High in Hayward, California. The past few weeks we have been discussing if whether or not T.V has an effect on children or people in general. We have watched shows which discuss the topic. For the most part all the shows we watched suggest that there is a relationship between T.V watching and aggression.

I donot think there is a connection between watching T.V and aggression later on in life. I believe that a child learns how to behave at school and outside. I think that parents especially are looking for a scapegoat to blame thier bad parenting on and they choose T.V because it cannot fight back. Parents need to take responsibility in all the things thier kids do and stop blaming T.V.

Jaimo Huerta

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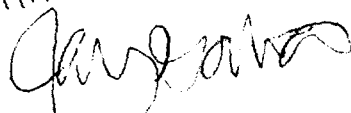
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I AM WRITING IN CONCERN OF THE NEW TV RATINGS THAT ARE NOW BEING USED. I AM AN ETHICS IN MEDIA STUDENT AT MOREAU CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL. WE HAVE BEEN STUDYING THESE NEW RATING SYSTEMS FOR QUITE SOMETIME AND THERE ARE SOME ISSUES WHICH I WOULD LIKE TO ADDRESS.

FIRST OF ALL, I AM GLAD THAT THERE FINALLY IS A RATING SYSTEM THAT ALLOWS PARENTS TO SEE WHAT PROGRAMS THEIR CHILDREN ARE VIEWING ARE LIKE. THERE ARE SOME PROBLEMS WITH THE SYSTEM THOUGH. ONE PROBLEM IS THAT THE RATING IS ONLY ON THE TV FOR A SHORT TIME. IF A PERSON MISSES THE FIRST FEW SECONDS OF A SHOW, THEN THEY MISS THE RATING. SOME SHOWS SHOW THE RATING AFTER EVERY COMMERCIAL BREAK. THIS IS A GOOD METHOD, BUT NOT ALL SHOWS DO THIS. ANOTHER PROBLEM IS THAT THE RATINGS ARE TOO VAGUE. THE RATINGS NEED TO BE MORE SPECIFIC IN TERMS OF WHY A PROGRAM GOT ITS PARTICULAR RATING. THERE SHOULD BE A METER FOR VIOLENCE, SEX, AND LANGUAGE.

THE RATING SYSTEM IS FAIRLY NEW. I'M SURE THAT WITH TIME, THESE AND OTHER PROBLEMS THAT MAY COME UP WILL BE ADDRESSED AND CORRECTED. FOR THE TIME BEING, I THINK THE RATING SYSTEM IS DOING A GOOD JOB. THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME.

  
JAY GOTTIA

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March 5, 1997

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To whom it may concern :

My name is John Pettinichio and I am a student at Moreau Catholic High School. I'm seventeen years old and a senior studying mass media and communications. In my course we are looking at the new rating system and the effects it is having on America. We are to determine whether we think the system is working or not and to look at what we think the ratings such as TV-14, TV-M and so on, mean. We are even asked to make up ratings on our own to make ourselves more involved with the program shown and its rating that was given by the network. My duty in this letter is to give you my point of view of the situation.

I would say that this isn't helping at all. I say this because parents are not going to let their children watch a program just because the network says the program isn't that bad, they are going to make the choice for their child. Another reason is that the network doesn't leave the rating in the corner long enough. A child can come in on a show that has been on for 20 seconds and won't know the rating because it only last for 15 seconds. My solution to this is to leave it there throughout the show since you can barely notice it in the first place. Now this will lead to the child who has been taught the right way by his or her parents to change the channel if it has a bad rating. The other problem that I have is that I think that the network should have more options on rating a show. I mean, they should give the viewer a variety of ratings such as TV-N for nudity or TV-V for violence. TV-14 doesn't inform me that this show has violence and nudity but TV-N and TV-V does. I just believe that these ratings would make it clearer and more specific. These are the only flaws that I have notice about this system and I want to thank you for taking the time to read my opinions.

Sincerely,

John Pettinichio

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To whom it may concern:

I am a junior at Moreau Catholic High School and would like to see a better rating system implemented. People should be able to choose the program they watch by knowing ahead of time what the program contains

a rating system broken down in levels to warn viewers of the content should be shown before each program specifying exactly if the rating is for violence, sex, or strong language. This would allow viewers to know what to expect. Many feel that violence, sex, and strong language negatively affect today's youth. A better rating system will allow parents to choose the type of program that is not a negative influence on their children.

Sincerely,

Lori Huntsman

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March 5, 1997

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As a member of an "Ethics in Media Communications" class, I want to address the issue of a TV ratings system. I am a junior at Moreau Catholic High School, and this class focuses on television and its enormous effects on our culture. The first thing that came to mind when I heard of a new ratings system for television was government. Having read many articles about today's television, I have heard of the "pressure" that Congress, as well as parents' activist groups, have been exerting on the prime-time television broadcasters. I do not know what this "pressure" is, but it was great enough that these television companies have given in and instituted a ratings system. If "pressure" constitutes government force, what has been done is wrong.

I often wonder what would have happened to the television broadcast companies if they had refused to institute such a system. I am not happy to hear that our new ratings system is here because of government "pressure". And aren't we all so eager for the emergence of the well-hyped "V-chip". I should say that I oppose both as long as it is a matter of force. Our government has no business telling us what we should watch on TV or what the broadcasters must do to make it safer for children to watch.

James Smith

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MOREAU CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL

## Ethics in Media Communications

Federal Communications Commission  
1919 M Street NW, Rm 222  
Washington, D.C. 20554

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March 5, 1997

To whom it may concern,

I am a male student at Moreau Catholic H. S. in Hayward, California. I have a class called Ethics in Mass Media, where we analyze everything the media does. I'd just like to voice some of my opinions, questions, and suggestions that I have concerning the T. V. rating system.

I feel it was a great idea putting in a rating system, at least it is something that can warn parents about what their children are going to view. It can also get them more prepared for what they may see with their children in some family time. Concerns I have with this are how are these ratings based, for "Y7" must there be a certain amount of scariness that would be unsuitable for children under seven. Also what about a child who might be slower or faster to mature, would that show then be improper for the child not as mature, or because the other child who has matured earlier be able to watch this when he is younger on account of his maturity? Or should this task of knowing what is too scary, too violent, or "bad" for children to see be held upon the parents? These same questions also apply to all of the other ratings, how can you know what is too much for someone, why should it be by age, everyone does mature at different rates. This whole rating system, I feel is a good step toward not letting children not watch what they are not mature enough to see, and people have to realize the system is not going to be perfect. Even though it may have flaws, at least it is some information, and some help toward making life better for the future.

Rating systems and other devices such as a V-chip is a good step toward filtering what children watch, but realistically everything is entirely held up to the parents, they are the controllers, and hopefully these types of systems can somehow help or aid parents, and hopefully they will make use of them. Because all of this help is offered to the public, but if they don't use it, what's the use of having them? The public must be educated, they must be shown how important things like the rating system really is, and then maybe they will use it, and recognize everyone that kept fighting to keep things like the rating system, and the V-chip.

Satnil Lallian

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I am writing this letter to you so you can think off new ways to improve your rating ~~system~~<sup>system</sup>. My name is David Gandhi and I am a sixteen year old junior attending Moreau Catholic High School in Hayward, California. Currently, I watch about 21 hours of T.V. a week and I have just recently learned about your rating system which is posted on the left hand corner of the T.V.

I am concerned about young kids that are watching programs that contain grotesque scenes that are inappropriate for them. I feel that your current rating system is not good enough and there can be ways to improve it. First of all your rating system does not tell parents what type of content the program contains. Who are you to determine what age group gets to see which program. Don't you know that some kids mature differently than others. Instead of having ages for your guidelines you should use letters or picture. For sex use the letter 'S' or have a picture of lips. For language use the letter 'L' or use a picture of a guy talking. For violent content use 'V' or use the picture of a gun. For death there should be a skull and cross bone or use the letter 'D'. If there is more violent content then more letters should be added or more pictures should be added. For example, use the letter 'S' twice if there is more sex content like 'SS'. Go all the way to five S's if there is that much sex content. Do the same for the pictures too. I feel that this will give parents a better way to choose which programs their kids can watch. Thank you for taking the time to reading my letter. I did not mean to ridicule your current system. I just feel that it can be improved and my system seems to be an improved version.

Sincerely,

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David Gandhi





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Washington, D.C. 20554

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Dear FCC,

I am a student from Moreau Catholic High School and I think the new ratings for each television show is a very good start for rating shows. The need for this rating system was very high. Kids these days need ratings for their shows. Kids need to learn when they see a rating that is not for their age group that they can not watch those shows. If parents do the right thing and teach their kids not to watch that they are not suppose to, then this system will work. The way to improve is to start using the V-chip and everyhting will be alright. When the rating system and the V-chip is used then parents will have no problem with their kids watching television. This system works very well.

Sincerely,

John W. Carney

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